

# Valley School Offer



## 1. Who can access Valley?

Valley School is a primary special school catering for pupils aged between 2 and 11 years, who have a range of complex and severe learning difficulties and is maintained by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Many pupils have additional needs including autism, physical and medical needs.

## 2. How does my child access this provision?

Admissions to Valley School are made by the Local Authority.

Most pupils usually have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Some of our youngest children will have an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan during their first year.

Nursery aged children are referred through Portage, Health Visitors or Therapy Services.

## 3. What is the provision?

There are 7 classes in total.

Our specialist Early Years provision is based in Ladybirds Class and caters for pupils within the Foundation Stage who have a wide and varied range of needs including profound and multiple learning difficulties, complex medical needs, sensory impairment and autism.

There are a further 6 classes Three classes are for children who have significant communication difficulties, including those on the ASC spectrum.

Three classes are predominantly for children with complex learning difficulties, including physical, sensory and medical needs.

Children generally spend between 2 and 3 years in each class with children of a similar age to each other.

Children in our classes have regular opportunities to come together to play and learn and to have wider social opportunities.

The children in our classes work at varying levels associated with severe and profound learning difficulties.

## 4. What are the benefits of attending Valley School?

Valley school has a maximum class size of eight children. There is a very high level of staffing. On average the staff team in each class comprises of one teacher and 4 teaching assistants.

The staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable, developing expertise closely linked to the nature of the needs of the children in their classes.

The school works in a collaborative, multi-disciplinary way, working closely with partners from a range of different agencies and therapy services to deliver programmes to meet each individual child's needs.

The school is grouped into three phases - Steps - and each has a unique emphasis. The curriculum is delivered through a topic based approach on a two year cycle, which develops in each Step and builds upon prior experience, skills and knowledge. Whilst the overall curriculum is broad and balanced, it allows for a personalised approach linked to children's own needs. It has a strong emphasis on developing play, communication and independence skills.

Valley school has had three Ofsted inspections rated Outstanding. These were in 2007, 2011 and 2016.

5. Does the school have any special facilities / resources?

The school has many special facilities. It is all on one level and fully accessible. There is overhead tracking in four classes and other key areas of school. There is a dedicated physiotherapy room, hydrotherapy pool, a soft play/ ball pool and specialist multi-sensory rooms.

The school has its own minibus to allow for educational visits. This has a lift for children who travel in wheelchairs.

All classes have access to low distraction working areas. Three classes are low distraction throughout. There are three sensory areas that can also provide a safe space for children to calm if they need it.

Each class opens onto an outdoor gated area which is an extension to the classroom. In the playgrounds there are a number of fixed pieces of play equipment including a climbing frame, swings (including fully accessible swings) and a slide. There is a sensory garden and an area where Forest School can be delivered.

The school is a very safe environment with coded entry and exit doors and other security features.

6. What specialist services are there in the school?

There is an extensive multi-disciplinary team working on site consisting of Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists and staff from Stockport Sensory Support team. We have routine visits from our Educational Psychologist.

The full-time School Nurse organises clinics including regular paediatric and a continence clinics and vision screening by the Orthoptist. Orthotics and wheelchair appointments are also held in school.

The full-time Family Liaison Worker works closely with parents and carers providing support and advice along with organising training and events.

Teaching staff from Stockport's Sensory Support Service work in school each week.

There are half termly consultations with a nurse from the Children's Community Learning Disability Team and a Clinical Psychologist from Healthy Young Minds.

Dinners are cooked by our school cook who caters for all special diets.

The school has strong links with Travel Coordination and provides training for drivers and passenger assistants.

The school's behaviour leads work with staff, families and other professionals to support the development of the children's positive behaviours. A member of staff is a Team Teach tutor.

7. Are there links with other schools?

We have various types of links with other schools.

- We are situated adjacent to Moss Hey Primary school and Fledglings Day Nursery. We work together closely to provide a wide range of inclusion opportunities on a weekly basis into several classes.
- We identify children for whom a mainstream primary link would be beneficial and strive to link them with their neighbourhood primary school (usually for a half-day session).
- A wide number of students from secondary schools and universities and colleges come to Valley for work experience and placements.

8. How will I know that my child is making progress?

Teachers inform parents of children's progress in a number of ways throughout the year.

- The Class Dojo app or a home/school book is used to inform parents about achievements made during the day and across the week. This includes photos and footage of the wide progress that the children make.
- Each child's evaluated Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is sent home each term.
- Teachers and therapists write full reports of progress a child has made over the year. These are discussed at the Annual Review meeting. Targets from the previous year are evaluated and new targets are agreed.
- A Parents Meeting is held during the autumn term.
- A summer report including photos is written summarising the year's progress.

9. How is my child's progress monitored and recorded?

Individual pupil's progress is carefully monitored using the school's assessment processes.

- Pupils are given a baseline assessment on arrival at school and their progress is monitored and tracked until they leave school.
- Each child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This is written three times a year and breaks down the EHCP (Educational, Health Care plan) outcomes and annual review targets into

smaller steps. Through ongoing observations and formative assessment, evidence of learning towards each target is gathered before being evaluated at the end of each term to show progress. Parents receive copies of this document. Assessment information is recorded on Evidence for Learning.

- Progress towards annual review targets are reported and discussed at the yearly meeting.
- Observations towards curriculum end goals are gathered including on 'Evidence for Learning'.
- Pupil progress meetings for individuals and whole classes are held between members of Senior Leadership Team and teachers to ensure that assessment decisions are consistent and robust.
- Statutory assessment including the EYFS Profile, Pre-key stage 1 and 2 standards and the Engagement Profile are completed.

10. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?

The overall curriculum is broad and balanced but is designed to allow for a personalised approach linked to children's own needs. It has a strong emphasis on developing play, communication and independence skills.

The curriculum is delivered through a topic based approach on a two year cycle, which develops in each Step and builds upon prior experience, skills and knowledge.

IEP targets are delivered across the day as well as in discrete IEP sessions.

Lessons are repeated over a half term to provide learning through a familiar structure and content.

11. What are the special approaches / strategies the school uses?

The school uses a total communication approach which includes symbols and visuals such as communication boards, PECS, Cues of Reference, Makaton signing and IT devices such as switches and Eye Gaze technology.

In addition we use a number of specialist teaching approaches to maximise the children's access to the curriculum. These include; sensory integration, aspects of TEACCH, multisensory teaching, Rebound Therapy, Look and Listen (Attention Autism), See and Learn and the use of low distraction environments.

12. How do you support my child's in the transition arrangement?

Visits to the school are welcomed and parents often choose to come along with staff who already know their child such as a Portage worker. The parents of children who are given a place at Valley are invited to a new parent meeting where they have the opportunity to talk with the Headteachers and Family Liaison worker as well as staff who will be working directly with their child. The children are then invited to attend pre-admission visit(s) to spend time in the class they will be joining. Once class teams are finalised, you will receive a staff list including video, photos and symbols to share. Transitions into school are helped by the close working relationship the school has with the professionals who already know your child.

Children transition into school at the pace that is right for them. These decisions are guided by their family and staff.

Transitions within school are supported by meetings between class teachers, the planned movement of familiar teaching assistants who move between classes each year and visits to new classrooms.

Transitions on to other schools are supported by the close liaison between the class teacher, the family liaison worker and the new school team. The receiving school is invited to visit and spend time with the children prior to them moving and the children make visits to their new school supported by familiar staff.

13. How does the school help me to support my child's learning?

We are committed to engaging parents in your child's education and as such good communication between home and school is crucial.

We want to ensure that you have the information you need about your child's learning and well-being in school. Class Dojo and/or the home-school diary are the ways in which the most frequent communication takes place between home and school when we do not see parents on a daily basis.

The school holds regular events throughout the year for parents to get involved in as well as meetings to discuss and review children's progress.

Parent/carer support group meetings organised by our Family Liaison Worker offer opportunities for parents to come together and to have access to speakers and training including on topics relating to children's learning.

14. How will you keep my child safe?

Keeping children safe is at the centre of all we do in school.

There are many safety features at Valley. First and foremost is the high level of staff. All staff are trained in child protection, moving and handling and Team Teach training. All staff and regular visitors to school are DBS checked. Only staff employed by Valley school are left in supervision of children. We have a number of staff who are first aid trained including paediatric first aiders.

Team Teach is Stockport's approved approach to supporting children who can show unsafe behaviour. This includes, as a last resort, physical interventions to keep children safe. Our physical environment is secured with key pads to all external doors and there is a requirement for all visitors to the school to sign in at the office and wear a badge around school. Most interior doors have high level handles to prevent children from leaving the classroom without adult supervision.

All off-site visits, including our annual residential visit, are fully risk assessed.

The school has a comprehensive Safeguarding policy. This is available on request.

15. How do you support children with additional medical needs?

We have a full-time school nurse on site. If your child has a medical need then a detailed Health Care Plan is compiled by the nurse and parents/carers. Health care plans are discussed and shared with all relevant staff working with your child. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are trained by the nursing team to administer regular medication, including tube feeding, asthma and epilepsy. At any one time there may be a few children who have additional nurse carer support to facilitate them being in school.

16. What opportunities are there outside the classroom?

Learning out of school is an important part of our curriculum. We offer two off-site PE opportunities; horse riding sessions and swimming at a local leisure centre.

We make use of community facilities to enrich our children's experiences, e.g. live music events at the Bridgewater Hall, ten pin bowling and cycling at Wythenshawe Wheelers.

We are involved in the Greater Manchester special schools network of summer and winter games.

Local community visits and outings to parks are regularly timetabled.

Each year our Year 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential holiday to an outdoor pursuits centre, Bendrigg Lodge in Cumbria. Children experience a wide range of activities including: canoeing, caving, climbing and abseiling.

17. How Governors involved and what are their responsibilities?

Valley school benefits from a highly experienced and supportive Governing Body whose members hold a great deal of expertise and knowledge about the school and are committed to engaging parents in their children's education.

Governors have a responsibility to make sure that the school's decisions are in pupil's best interests and to promote high standards of educational achievement. The Governing Body monitors and evaluates the work on school improvement issues. All Governors share a joint responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The Governing Body agrees priorities for spending with the overall aim that children will receive the support they need in order to make progress.

18. How will my child's voice be heard?

Staff are skilled at interpreting children's responses and reading their behaviour. We use communication boards, objects of reference and symbols to help children make choices and express their feelings. You can support us in giving your child a voice by actively using Class Dojo including letting us know what your child has done at the weekend and in the holidays. At the end of each day

each class has an activity called 'reflection time'. This is one way in which children are given the opportunity to celebrate something positive about their day.

Children are helped to contribute to their Annual Review.

19. What are the arrangements if a parent has any complaints?

Complaints about the Headteacher, the Governing Body or the Local Authority carry out their responsibilities should be discussed with the Headteachers in the first instance. The school complies with Stockport's agreed procedure for complaints.

20. Who can I contact for further information?

We welcome visits to the school. These can be arranged through the Headteachers, Debbie Thompson and Helen McLoughlin. Please contact the school office on 0161 439 7343.

Valley School is one of a number of special schools in the Stockport Borough. [Link to local offer](#)